

REVIEWS

Hopkinson, C., Tomášková, R. and Zapletalová, G. (eds) (2016) *Professional Genres from an Interpersonal Perspective*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 277 pp.

The monograph *Professional Genres from an Interpersonal Perspective* brings together, as the title suggests, linguistic research in the area of genre analysis with focus on the interpersonal component. Analyzing the interpersonal aspects within several professional genres, the authors draw on the concepts of ‘intersubjective positioning’ (Widdowson 2012) and ‘the interpersonal in the language’ (Martin & White 2005), the aim being to explore and reveal possible mutual interconnection of interpersonal meanings and particular genre conventions. The analyses of ‘the interpersonal’ within the genres under investigation bear in mind both the ‘conventional/social’ level and the ‘individual level’, the former representing the characteristic communicative purpose of a genre and particular genre conventions, and the latter incorporating aspects such as authors’ personalities and positioning towards the content as well as the audience, among others.

The volume comprises nine chapters in three sections. The genres investigated cover four main discourse domains – media discourse, academic discourse, institutional and promotional discourse; the last two form a joint section due to their mutual overlap.

Section One *Genres in Mass Media* includes two chapters. Zuzana Nádraská explores the structure of hard news with focus on the interaction of voices in news texts, namely concessive and concurring sequences, i.e. parts of text containing voices of disagreement and agreement. Applying the dialogic perspective, the author reveals a possible influence of different voices on the orbital generic structure of hard news. Her investigation demonstrates how concessive, concessive-concurring and concurring sequences of paragraphs contribute to the dialogicity of the text, and thus either open or diminish dialogic space. The other chapter in Section One by Lenka Kopečková focuses on interpersonal relations in political speeches by the Czech and British Prime Ministers, namely the speeches they delivered at the beginning of their terms addressing both the general public and the media, the aim of speeches being to present their policies as well as persuade and impress the audience. The author looks into grammatical features such as pronouns, other referential expressions and modality with focus on the speaker’s self-reference. The results reveal that speeches by both Czech and British prime ministers display a tendency towards personal rather than

impersonal expression. Still, the speeches by British prime ministers are more personal in that they emphasize personal involvement and display confidence as well as responsibility, whereas the speeches by Czech prime ministers appear more formal and less direct as they, for example, sometimes tend to shift from personal to collective responsibility, which the author attributes among other factors to the specificities of the institution of prime minister in the two countries – within the British political system the prime minister’s position is much stronger than the position of the Czech prime minister.

Section Two titled *Genres in Academic Settings* comprises three chapters which explore the genres of conference papers, undergraduate textbooks and book reviews. Gabriela Zapletalová’s study investigates the communicative functions of the introductory stage of conference papers which, in her words, is “a critical rhetorical move with a number of inherent traits” (p. 76). Exploring the rhetorical structure of conference papers introductions by non-native speakers, Zapletalová focuses on the move model of conference paper introductions, the occurrence and frequency of the moves and steps within the corpus, and also offers a mutual comparison of senior researchers, junior researchers and PhD researchers, as the experience of speakers also has to be taken into account. Among other results, she finds out that the dominant strategies identified in the majority of introductions are the two sub-moves of the *Setting up the framework* move – Interpersonal Framework and Discourse Framework, which clearly demonstrates the interactional character of the genre.

Tereza Guziurová explores hedging devices in research articles and undergraduate textbooks within the discipline of linguistics in order to explore the forms and functions of metadiscourse with focus on its interpersonal features. The quantitative analysis is complemented with a much more revealing qualitative analysis which reveals that the most frequent type of hedge identified in research articles is epistemic lexical verbs, whereas in undergraduate textbooks it is adverbs. Apart from presenting the author’s research, the paper also discusses the theory of metadiscourse as such and various approaches to it that frame the contemporary research.

In her investigation of book reviews, Dontcheva-Navratilova deals with social interaction in this evaluative genre with focus on the expression of praise and criticism, namely negative and positive evaluative acts. The analysis offers a valuable insight into the genre which, compared to other academic genres, has been studied less extensively so far, yet it displays a wealth of interpersonal meanings that stem from its interpersonal function, i.e. negotiation of social relations between the reviewer and the author of the book evaluated as well as the discourse community. The corpus includes reviews of monographs, edited

collections and handbooks published in the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. The results reveal that the degree of criticism and praise seems to differ with the type of authorship with the reviewers following the principles of politeness. Reviews of monographs display a higher degree of positive evaluative acts, mainly concerning the contribution of the work to the field whereas criticism is expressed less directly, for example through the use of hedges. The reviews of handbooks contain a considerably higher degree of negative evaluative acts, mainly concerning the organization and choice of materials, while praise generally concerns the usefulness of the work to the readership.

Section Three *Genres in Institutional and Promotional Discourse* presents investigations of the interpersonal component within the modern genres of institutional and promotional discourse, namely websites, blogs and advertising leaflets. Christopher Hopkinson's study is concerned with the genre of responses to customers' reviews on the TripAdvisor website. The author focuses on the relatively rare antagonistic and aggressive responses from the hoteliers to negative customer reviews, the focus being to determine the main features of such responses and the relational effects on the participants. Attention is paid not only to the effects in relation to the complainant but also to potential future customers. Although relatively rare, such responses have an enormous potential in constructing the face of the participants, being primarily persuasive both on the individual and group level.

Renata Tomášková's study explores the still developing and relatively new genre of university websites. She analyses British, North American and Czech university websites and their generic structure and points to their heteroglossic nature. In particular, she demonstrates how a personal genre, here student blogs, is embedded into otherwise impersonal institutional genre (a university website) and thus enables to incorporate 'other voices', personalize the website and help to present and promote the university in general and make it attractive to prospective students. The analysis thus shows that student blogs with their many interpersonal features are an important part of the genre of university website.

In her investigation of official websites of major world oil companies, Dita Trčková explores the main discursive legitimation strategies used by these companies that due to the effects of their business on the environment need to legitimate themselves more than others. Drawing on van Leeuwen's (2008) classification of legitimation means, she has found out that all the major companies display a number of similarities, or even uniformity, in the use of legitimation strategies, which applies also to their rhetoric and underlying ideologies, the main aim being to create the impression and persuade the public that their existence is necessary, that they are working towards being environmentally responsible and therefore should be accepted by the public.

Ivana Řezníčková explores the discourse of advertising leaflets on non-prescriptive pharmaceutical products with focus on persuasive strategies employed in them in order to create a particular relationship between the customer, producer and product, and thus make the product attractive to prospective customers. The analysis presents a comparison of Czech and British leaflets, including both verbal and non-verbal features, and identifies a number of differences, the main difference being the overall character of the leaflets. Whereas British leaflets comply with the strategies characteristic of advertising discourse, Czech leaflets tend to be more impersonal and close to professional discourse rather than advertising discourse, which is also reflected in the attitude to the ‘reader’ – the Czech one being rather a patient than a customer. On the other hand, both in Czech and British leaflets the producer is rather suppressed to the background, unlike in other types of advertising discourse.

As demonstrated above, the present volume presents a wealth of research into professional genres and the interpersonal component, and offers a valuable insight into a number of academic genres, both traditional and modern. It illustrates the variety of current research into the study of genres, some relatively novel and therefore not extensively explored yet, and thus opens space for further linguistic research and new directions for researchers.

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